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then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, given to hospitality, apt to teach."—Chap. iii. v. 2. "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre."—Chap. iii. v. 8. Any law that has been framed contrary to the above authorities I cannot hesitate to pronounce an infernal one, whether it proceeds from the Vatican of Rome, or from the Cathedral of Canterbury. We find in Genesis the following precept—"Increase and multiply, and fill the land." The influence of this command is omnipotent, and is felt by all living things—by man and beast, by the insects of the air, as well as by the fishes of the sea. How do, then, thousands of men escape the all-powerful influence of this primary law under the warm sun of Spain or France? The answer is very obvious—they cannot; as it is equally powerful on the banks of the Seine as on those of the sunny Tagus. If his Satanic Majesty could summon together an assembly of the most atrocious sinners in his wide dominion, to form an ordinance by which he could people his infernal empire with the souls of the damned, they could not frame a more effectual one than that which establishes the celibacy of the priesthood. I am fully justified in making this strong observation from my own personal observation and experience, as well as from the extent of my reading. Paul IV. was obliged to issue a Bull to the Inquisition in the sixteenth century to inquire into the immorality of the priests of Spain. The Bull commences in these words—"Whereas, certain ecclesiastics in the kingdom of Spain, in the cities and dioceses, having the care of souls, have broken out into such heinous acts of iniquity as to abuse the sacrament of penance, in the very act of hearing confessions, by enticing and provoking females to lewd actions at the very time they are making their confessions." The inquisition commenced to discover the sacerdotal delinquents; but the abuse was so general the scandal would be in proportion, and it was agreed to consign the prosecution to the Greek Kalends. I would not cite this instance of Papal interference to prevent this fearful iniquity, if it was confined to a few individuals who would only form the exceptions; but as the entire kingdom of Spain is included in the Pope's Bull, it forms an insuperable argument why that penal statute should be obliterated from the records of mankind. Now, if the priests of Spain were so profligate, what charter of exemption can those of Portugal, Italy, England, and Ireland claim from this the worst of all penal ordinances?

Were not the prophets and patriarchs married, and several of the apostles, with some of the evangelists? Is it not more criminal to see ecclesiastics living in the most abandoned debauchery than to see them enter into the holy state of matrimony?—matrimony which, the Apostle Paul says, is honourable in *all* men."

I could point out the names of some of the most eminent bishops who were married, and the ages they lived in up to the time of the apostles, but as this historical fact will not be denied, I will only mention that "Bishop Spiridon was Father of St. Basil, and father-in-law to Gregory Nazianzen, and that the See of Ephesus was in the family of Polycrates during the period of seven hundred years. But what will devout Roman Catholics say when they are told that some of the Popes themselves are the sons of bishops. Felix III., Adrian II., Agapetus I., and Agapetus II.: nor was the sanctity of St. Patrick retarded by being the son of a deacon, and the grandson of a priest. If it should, however, irritate Roman Catholics to tell them such a simple fact, that the bishops and priests of their Church were married, will it please them more if I tell them, that in the very year that the Pope was framing the Bull to prevent the marriage of the clergy, he was himself laying the foundation of one of the most illustrious houses in Italy, with the help of the Countess Matilda, who had a beautiful chateau on one of those picturesque slopes that look down upon the classic shores of Etruria. Will anyone believe that the pure air of the Apennine and the desire Hildebrand had of assisting the countess at her devotions, were the only motives that induced his Holiness to visit these lovely solitudes? How prophetic were the words of St. Paul, and how applicable to the Church of Rome, is the language of the apostle where he says, "that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."—Tim. iv. 3.

The infallibility of the Church is the next question which I proposed to discuss—a doctrine which was first propounded by the Jesuits for their own private ends, and to flatter the vanity of the Popes, and was afterwards sanctioned by the second Council of Nice in the year 786. If the Church of Rome was infallible, the infallibility must be found in the aggregate of the individuals forming that Church, or in her general councils, or in the Popes. But it is not found in either; every individual is fallible, and the aggregate of fallible individuals must be fallible. It could not exist in her general councils, as it is admitted even by Roman Catholics that the Council of Rimini was an Ecumenical council, and erred, having deliberately signed the Arian heresy; and to which Pope Liberius himself annexed his name. Nor can it be found in the Popes. Was Leo X., an atheist, infallible? Was Alexander VI., an incestuous Pontiff, infallible? Or, may I ask, was John XXII. infallible, the most profligate of mankind? Although the

Council of Trent has cautiously abstained from publishing any decree on this subject, yet the Pope, bishops, and priests still cling with unshaken tenacity to infallibility as the culminating point upon which all the dogmas of their Church depend. The promises made by our Lord in the following texts of Scripture, are the foundation upon which they build their doctrine of infallibility:—"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matt. xvi. 18. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt. xxviii. 20. There are two things that can be obviously deduced from these texts of Scripture—the first is, the existence of the Church to the end of time; and the second is, that God will never withdraw his protecting hand from his Church. Nothing can be more clear that the Church of Christ is to last to the end of time, than that she is increasing since the death of Christ under the protection of heaven, and by the labours of the missionaries all over the world. It is no less certain that God has exercised a vigilant care over his Church since her foundation, as she never disappeared, even in the most abandoned times. It is quite true that errors have crept into the Church in the middle ages, both from the avarice and ambition of the Popes, and from the gross ignorance of the times, yet she never disappeared. She always retained the Holy Scriptures, believed the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel dispensation, and was the treasury of God's Holy Word, although some base coin was issued, from time to time, from the mint of the Vatican. The time arrived when the Reformation became absolutely necessary, when there was no morality, no discipline, no literature, no reverence for divine things, and religion was almost extinct. Did not all this justify the reformers in commencing the great and arduous task of reforming a Church then immersed in vice and abominable wickedness, when Leo X., an infidel, was Pope and Vicar of Christ.

The great Burke said, that all corporate bodies stand in need of reformation from time to time, and that they who undertook this arduous task deserved the best thanks of the commonwealth.

The reformers, instead of receiving every possible praise for their intrepid conduct in stemming the torrent of vice and immorality that then threatened to deluge the world, there is no epithet, however vituperative, in the English language, that is not, even now, poured out against the memory of those men of learning and morals, and which, I regret to add, is the besetting sin of modern Roman Catholics. If the Church was infallible, in the Roman Catholic sense of the expression, she could not err, and, up to the present day, she would want no reformation, as she would be "without spot or wrinkle." To prove that the Church was overwhelmed with every vice to which human nature is subject, and required a dyke of powerful strength to resist the flood of unsound doctrine and scandalous conduct which threatened to deluge a trembling world, hear what Catholic authorities, of great eminence, say upon this subject.

The Cardinal of Cambray says—"Although there are great evils which we see, yet unless the Church be speedily reformed, we shall, in a short time, see unspeakably greater."

Nicholas de Clemangis writes as follows—"That wicked persons did so much abound, in all professions of men, that scarce one in a thousand was to be found who lived answerably to his profession."

The Cardinal of Lorraine, at the Council of Trent said—"That all the calamities which had befallen France were to be attributed to the general corruption of manners that prevailed in that country."

Cardinal Julian tells Eugene IV.—"That the people were above measure incensed against the ecclesiastical state by the dissolute lives of the clergy, for which it is greatly to be feared, unless they mend their manners, lest the laymen, after the example of the Hussites, fall foul upon the whole clergy."

The Suffragan Bishop of Salzburg speaks of the clergy in the following words, at the commencement of the Reformation—"The modern and unhappy clergy neglect the love of God and of their neighbour; they are addicted to infamous practices, and neglect the salvation of the souls of God's people."

I could quote authorities without end to show the necessity of a reformation in the Church at the time it happened; but the above are quite sufficient for the purpose. Roman Catholics assert, contrary to fact, that it was no reformation, but the creation of a new religion; whereas, the reformers only fell back upon primary principles, and expunged all unsound, extraneous, and antisciptural doctrine, which was introduced into the Church during the dark ages. This universal depravity of morals, and the heathen doctrine then taught in the Church, prove its fallibility, and the impurity of the water that flowed from the Cistern of the Hills.

(To be continued.)

ROMAN CATHOLIC ANTINOMIANISM.

It has often been a subject of complaint in countries ruled over by monarchs with absolute power, that those who did the king faithful service have been neglected, and their interest sacrificed to that of the flatterers who thronged his court. Many a soldier who has grown gray in fighting his sovereign's battles, without reward, has murmured at seeing gay courtiers put over his head, whose only

merit was, that they had humoured the weakness or ministered to the pleasures of their prince; and often, too, have complaints been excited at the easy pardon which the cruelty or oppression of courtiers has received, provided they have taken care to make themselves personally agreeable to their master. "More than one well-disposed ruler," says a distinguished writer, "has given up whole provinces to rapine and oppression, merely from a wish to see none but happy faces round his own board, and in his own walks. No man is fit to govern great societies who hesitates about disobliging the few who have access to him, for the sake of the many whom he will never see." Some authors have been so ungallant as to say, that the weakness which we are here describing is one to which female sovereigns have been particularly liable. A few flattering compliments, with some profession of personal attachment, have, in their case, often been considered as atonement for serious crimes, and have outweighed the solid services of less showy competitors.

One of the most odious features in the idolatry of the heathen is, that they have not only framed for themselves gods in the likeness of men, but that they have taken some of the vilest and worst of men as the models of their divinities. While they rightly judged that the relation of a king to his subjects was one which, in some degree, was a representation of the relation of God to his creatures, they have degraded the majesty of heaven by comparing it to some of those weak and worthless earthly monarchs, whose faults we have attempted to describe. It was a common error in the heathen systems to imagine that their gods could be bribed by a few prayers or a few sacrifices to overlook the vices of their worshippers and that they would not make any severe examination into the conduct of those who were careful to give them due praise and honour.

In the true religion, on the other hand, all possibility of an error of this kind has been carefully guarded against. No wicked man is allowed for a moment to think that, unless he forsake his sins, his prayers or his devotions can gain him any favour from God. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," says our Saviour to those who offered him this homage of the lips, "and do not the things which I say."—Luke vi. 46. David expresses the conviction of every Christian when he tells us—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—Psalm lxxvi. 18. So far is it from being the case that one continuing in wickedness can, by prayers offered in such a state of mind, mitigate the displeasure of God, that, doubtless, the hypocrisy of such worship only makes him more hateful to a God of purity; and we are expressly told that the sacrifice of the wicked is *abomination* in the sight of God.—Prov. xv. 8.

It may be imagined that doctrine like this would not be very acceptable to men who were unwilling to forsake their sins, and yet who longed for some reason to hope that continuance in sin would not be attended with ultimate danger; who wished to find some expedient for keeping up some claim on the favour of God, even when they were transgressing his commands, so that they might be able to reckon on obtaining from him, at the last hour, the grace of repentance and pardon. And if God would not be mocked with the prayers of impenitent sinners—if He declared their sacrifice abomination—could no one else be found more indulgent, or who would undertake the patronage of sinners on easier terms? These are the cravings of men's corrupt hearts, which we are ashamed to say that priests of our religion have been found to satisfy; and that at the expense of the honour of one whom all Christians ought to be ready to hold in reverence. There is one whose earthly life we may lawfully believe to have been graced with such holiness as a child of fallen Adam may attain unto, and yet who is represented as the patron and the protector of wilful sinners. Protestants have been often accused of hating the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of being jealous of her honour; but we know of no representations so degrading to her character as those given by some of those Roman Catholic divines who have professed the greatest devotion to her. While zealous for her material dignity—while claiming for her the title of Queen of Heaven—they represent her as exercising her sovereignty in a manner which would disgrace the weakest and vainest of earthly queens. They represent her as intensely jealous of personal compliments; angry if they are withheld; but ready to give anything, and forgive anything, to those who make a profession of personal attachment to her. We know not how any Roman Catholic, zealous for the real honour of the Virgin, can read, without disgust, such books as St. Liguori's "Glories of Mary," and others of the same character, which, while intended to do honour to the Mother of our Lord, would, if they were true, be highly degrading to her character. We give a few specimens, principally from the "Glories of Mary," of the stories to which we refer; and we ask our readers to say, whether an earthly queen, who should allow herself to be so influenced by a few compliments, would be considered fit to govern a great country.

We are obliged by the pressure of other matter to omit several of the stories which we had marked for quotation, and which were intended to illustrate the great value which the Blessed Virgin is represented as setting on the honours paid to her; and how completely (if we are to believe Roman Catholic writers) her character must have changed since she was on earth, where we never hear of her being greedy of praise and adoration. Thus

we cannot afford space to quote Mr. Faber's story, how she appeared to "our own St. Thomas of Canterbury," to thank him for the "Hail Marys," he was in the habit of repeating, and to request him to add a few more to his daily list. Nor, again, how when "the Blessed Joseph Herman, the Premonstratensian," being employed to act as sentinel, to guard a church from robbers, had omitted some of his usual "Hail Marys," the Virgin appeared to him, not as usual, in youth and beauty, but old and wrinkled; and how, when he asked the reason, she explained to him how much hurt she felt at his neglect of her, and how she begged him another time to say his full number of "Hail Marys," and leave the guardianship of the church to her. These and some other stories of the same kind we must leave out, and hasten on to those which have more immediate reference to the subject of our preceding remarks. What should we think of an earthly sovereign who, when asked to execute judgment on a notorious offender, should answer, that the criminal was in the habit of frequently paying compliments to her, and that she made it a rule never to execute justice on a friend of hers. Well, let our readers peruse the following story, which we take from the "Glories of Mary" (vol. i., p. 360. Dublin, J. Duffy, 1851), and let them say whether they think those who invented, or who repeat such a tale, have added to the honour of "the Queen of Heaven":—

"In Domans, in France, there was a married man who, though his wife was living, kept up a criminal intimacy with another woman. The wife, being unable to bear such maltreatment, continually besought the Lord to punish the crimes of her husband. She went one day before an altar of the Blessed Virgin, in a certain church, to implore just vengeance against the woman who lived with him. The other woman went every day before the same image to recite a 'Hail Mary.' The Divine Mother appeared one night, in a dream, to the person who had been maltreated by her husband; the woman instantly began to exclaim, as usual—'Justice, O Mother of God, justice.' The Blessed Virgin replied—'Do you ask justice from me? Go and find some one else to execute justice. For my part, I will not do it. Know that the sinner against whom you demand justice, recites a salutation every day in my honour; and I will endeavour to save from the vengeance due to their sins those who recite that salutation.'"

Thus our readers will see that, though the prayers of the wicked may be abomination to God, it is not so with the Virgin; and the wickedness of her votaries does not prevent her from being flattered by their attention, and duly rewarding their devotion. St. Liguori tells us distinctly, and endeavours to prove by citations from grave authors, as well as by historical examples, that "a client of Mary, who honours her faithfully, and recommends himself to her, CANNOT BE LOST."—p. 313. The edition of the "Glories of Mary" from which we quote, is what may be called a controversial edition, and is furnished with notes to defend Liguori from the objections of Protestants, and, when the saint's words appear objectionable, to tell us what he meant—or, at least, what he ought to have meant. In the present instance there is a note to explain that the saint only means to speak of those clients of Mary who sincerely wish to repent of their past sins, and to lead a holy life. Now, we assert, and shall presently prove by abundance of examples, that this is a most unfair distortion of the saint's meaning, and that all his stories show that he wished to teach that all who honour the Virgin—sinners or saints, penitent or impenitent—should receive from her a certainty of salvation as their reward. But, to avoid being misunderstood, we must explain that we do not believe St. Liguori teaches that the Virgin brings any to heaven without their repenting beforehand. No sinner, however, is so unreasonable as to expect to get to heaven without first performing some ceremony of this kind. But what makes them uncomfortable in their sins is, the fear that, if they continue in them, death may overtake them without their ever having repented. This is a point which Protestant preachers often urge on their hearers—that every hour they continue in sin strengthens its power over them, and increases the unlikelihood of their repentance, while the uncertainty of life makes their continuance in unrepented sin fearfully dangerous. Now, from all uneasiness of this kind, St. Liguori delivers his disciples. The tendency of his instructions is as follows:—"Repent and forsake your sins by all means; this is what I recommend as the best and safest course. What, you find this too great an effort? Well, then, at least, do not forget to say, every day, a 'Hail Mary,' and, no doubt, the good Mother will procure for you, at some time or other, the grace of contrition."

Schoolboys, sometimes, when the master is away, are afraid to play their mad pranks, lest the unexpected appearance of their teacher should bring punishment on them; but, sometimes, by leaving one of their number outside, to give them timely notice of the master's coming, they are able to carry on their mischievous tricks in comfort and security. Just such a service as this does St. Liguori represent the Blessed Virgin as affording to sinners who honour her, allowing them to continue comfortably in their sins for a sufficient space of time, but taking care to warn them before it is too late, and by obtaining repentance for them, to secure them from all unpleasant consequences.

We shall now enable our readers to judge whether we

are justified in bringing this charge against Liguori. The first story which we shall quote is the "Example" which St. Liguori appends to the chapter in which he asserts that it is morally impossible that a servant of Mary can be lost. And we must say that we feel much indebted to the saint for his habit of affixing examples to all his chapters; for nothing tends to make a writer's meaning so clear as when he illustrates, by particular examples, the sense in which he uses his general propositions—

"In the year 1604, there were, in the City of Flanders, two young students, who, instead of attending to the acquisition of learning, sought only the indulgence of the appetite, and the gratification of their unchaste passions. One night they went to a house of ill-fame; after some time, one of them, called Richard, returned home, the other remained. After having reached his house, Richard, while undressing, in order to go to bed, remembered that he had not said the 'Hail Marys' which he was accustomed to recite every day in honour of the Virgin. Being oppressed with sleep, he felt a great repugnance to say them; however, he did violence to himself, and recited the usual 'Hail Marys,' without devotion, and half asleep. He went to bed, and, during his first sleep, he heard a loud knock at the door, and instantly saw before him his companion, presenting a deformed and hideous appearance. 'Who are you?' said Richard. 'Do you not know me?' replied the other. 'How,' rejoined Richard, 'have you undergone such a change? you look like a demon.' 'Ah, unhappy me,' exclaimed the other, 'I am damned. In leaving that infamous house, a devil came and strangled me. My body lies in the middle of the street, and my soul is in hell. Know that the same chastisement also awaited you, but the Blessed Virgin, on account of the little devotion of reciting the 'Hail Marys' has saved you from it. Happy if you know how to avail yourself of this warning, which the Mother of God sends you through me!' After these words he opened his cloak, and showed Richard the flames and serpents by which he was tormented, and then disappeared. Richard, shedding a torrent of tears, fell prostrate on the ground to thank Mary, his deliverer; and while he was reflecting on a change of life he heard the bell of the Franciscans calling them to matins. He then said—'Here God calls me to do penance.' He went instantly to the convent, and entreated the fathers to receive him. Being aware of the wicked life he had led, they at first refused; but he related, with tears, all that had happened; two of the fathers went into the street and found the strangled body of his companion, which was as black as a cinder; they then received him into the convent. Richard began to lead an exemplary life; he afterwards went to the Indies to preach the faith; he thence passed into Japan, and, in the end, had the happiness of being burned alive, and of dying a martyr for Jesus Christ."—Glories of Mary, vol. i., p. 322.

Here, then, our readers can see whether this client of Mary sincerely intended to repent of his past sins, and to lead a holy life. There were, in fact, two men, equally guilty, equally impenitent; but the one, because he repeated his Ave Maria, "without devotion and half asleep," was rescued from the doom that overtook the other, obtained the grace of contrition, and eventually the crown of martyrdom. We give another story, taken from Father Muzarelli's "Month of Mary," which will serve to show how little the Blessed Virgin requires of her clients, and how mere mechanical devotion to her is represented as sufficient to procure the grace of contrition and to obtain forgiveness—

"A blood-stained man, full of enormous crimes, was earnestly entreated by his wife to fast on Saturday in honour of Mary, and to recite an Ave Maria to her when he fell in with an image of her, since he was not disposed to bring himself down to penance. He did so, perhaps more to please his wife than anything else; nevertheless, from this devotion his felicity took its beginning. One day, in a journey, he entered into a church to refresh himself from the heat; he saw an image of Mary, and, without much devotion, he said an Ave Maria. As he drew back he perceived the infant Jesus, who was in the arms of his most holy mother, was wounded all over and bathed in blood; he shuddered at such a sight, and, turning to the Virgin, he said—'Who has ill-treated your son this day?' 'You,' replied she, 'with your sins, have wounded the Son of God and my son.' At these words this man began to weep exceedingly, and prayed the Virgin, with many sobs, to obtain his pardon. But the holy infant showed no wish to hear his mother's prayers. Then the Virgin redoubled her entreaty,* and said—'but what can be denied to Mary?' She received the grace, and said to him, kiss the wounds of my Son. He did so, and seemed to see that upon this act the infant's wounds were healed by his contrition. This done, he left the church, and the world also, since, by common consent, he and his wife retired to take a religious life."

Here is another tale with the same moral. We have to apologize to our Protestant subscribers for citing so many; but one or two examples would give the reader no idea of the urgency with which the same doctrine is enforced—viz., that the most abandoned sinners may be certain of ultimate salvation if they will only not neglect to make Mary their friend.

"A young man who had lost his father, was sent by his

* St. Liguori tells us here that the Virgin (the image, we suppose) placed the infant in the niche and prostrated herself before it.

† This story is also to be found in the "Glories of Mary," vol. i., p. 197.

mother to be the page of a certain prince. But before they parted, his mother, who had a great devotion for the Holy Virgin, made her Son promise that he would repeat every day the *Angelic Salutation*, and with it this short ejaculatory supplication—'Blessed Virgin, assist me at the hour of my death.' The young man was no sooner arrived at the court than he plunged into every kind of vice; and his bad conduct lost him entirely the favour of his master, who, at last, dismissed him from his service. In despair, and without any means of subsistence, he became a highwayman; but, even whilst he was robbing and murdering on the king's highway, he remained faithful to the practice of piety, which his mother had enjoined him. At length his crimes met with their reward; he fell into the hands of justice, and was condemned to death. He was thrown into prison, there to remain till he should be summoned to undergo the penalty of the law. On the evening before the day that was fixed for his execution, his disgrace, his approaching death, and the grief of his poor mother, presented themselves so vividly to his mind, that he was buried in sad thoughts, and his tears flowed abundantly; when, all at once, he beheld before him a young man, who, addressing him, offered to deliver him from prison and death, if he would bind himself to obey him. The prisoner gave the promise, when the young man disclosed to him that he was the devil, and commanded him, in the first place, to renounce Jesus Christ and the sacraments, to which the prisoner consented. 'That is not enough,' added the evil spirit, 'you must also deny the Holy Virgin, and renounce her protection.' 'That I will never do,' replied the criminal; and, addressing the Mother of God, he repeated the prayer which he was in the habit of making to her—'Blessed Virgin, succour me in the hour of death.' These words put the devil to flight; but the poor young man remained inconsolable for having denied his Saviour; in his affliction, he had recourse to Mary, and prayed to her with such fervour that she obtained for him a sincere contrition for his sins, under the influence of which he confessed with a deep feeling of penitence. On the next day, as the officers were leading him to the place of execution, he had to pass by an image of the Mother of God; he saluted it, and said—'Blessed Virgin, succour me in the hour of death.' The image, in the sight of all who were present, inclined its head, and returned the salutation. Penetrated by this mark of favour, he asked permission to kiss the feet of the image. The soldiers who were conducting him, did not at all like this; but, as the people murmured, they did not venture to refuse his request. The young man stooped down, and the image, extending its arms, took him by the hand, and held him so tight, that it was impossible to get him away again. At this miracle but one cry was heard—'pardon! pardon!' and the pardon was granted. He returned to his country, and ever after led an exemplary life, retaining the most tender gratitude to Mary who had saved him from two deaths, a temporal and an eternal one."

The stories we have given sufficiently show the readiness of the Virgin Mary to obtain the forgiveness of God for the most abandoned sinners, who have put themselves under her protection; but man is sometimes less merciful than God, and will not so easily forget the past history of those who have led a life of crime. But even this has been provided for. We have been obliged, by want of space, to erase the story of Sister Beatrix from our extracts; but our readers will find, at p. 284 of "The Glories of Mary," how this nun, being urged by criminal passion, left her nunnery, but, on departing, placed her dress and the keys which she held as portress, beneath a picture of the Virgin, asking Mary to take her place, and fill it more worthily than she had done; and how, after living a life of prostitution for fifteen years, she happened to hear that Sister Beatrix had a high character for holiness, and had been promoted to be mistress of the novices; and how, on inquiry, she found that the Virgin had taken her at her word, had assumed her form during the whole time that she lived in vice; so that she was able to resume her office with the best of characters, and no one was the wiser, until Sister Beatrix, on her death-bed, thought fit to reveal the truth for the glory of Mary.

There are other stories which show the dangerous consequences of omitting an Ave Maria. We pass over the story of Esquilio, whom the Virgin herself ordered to be led to the fire, rejecting the intercessions of the saints on his behalf, on the grounds that he had been exceedingly wicked, and that he had never said so much as an Ave Maria, though the good mother did eventually allow herself to be prevailed on to relent. But the following story, to the same effect, is, perhaps, better worthy of extract:—

"In Venice there was a celebrated advocate who became rich by fraud and bad practices. Almost the only good

* The version here given we had copied some time since from a translation made from a French edition of the "Glories of Mary." On comparing it with Mr. Duffy's translation (vol. i., p. 272) we find that the latter makes no mention of the young man having been ready to deny Jesus, though he refused to deny Mary. There is another very similar story at p. 245, where a young man is represented as having refused to deny Mary, and no mention is made by Mr. Duffy of his having renounced our Lord; and yet afterwards when the Virgin intercedes for him, Jesus at first replies—"This ungrateful sinner has renounced my service." We are led, therefore, to believe that Mr. Duffy has designedly departed from the text of Liguori; and we are heartily glad to see that there is any St. Liguori that is thought too strongly for Ireland. We only wish there was more of it which Mr. Duffy and his friends were ashamed of. If any of our friends could furnish us with a French or Italian edition of "The Glories of Mary," we should feel obliged.—(Ed.)

action which he performed was to say certain prayers every day to the holy Virgin; and through the mercy of Mary this miserable devotion was the means of saving him from eternal death! Behold how! He had the good fortune of contracting a friendship with Father Matthew de Basso. He pressed this father so much to dine with him on a certain day, that the father, at length, consented; as soon as the father entered the house, the advocate said to him—'Father, I will show you a thing which you never have seen. I have a wonderful ape that does the work of a servant—he washes the glasses, lays the table, and opens the door for me.' 'Perhaps,' replied the father, 'it is not an ape, but something else; let me see it.' The ape is called repeatedly, but does not appear; at length, he is found concealed under a bed, but refuses to come out. 'Let us,' said the religious, 'go and see him.' As soon as he arrived at the place along with the advocate, he said—'Infernal beast, come forward; on the part of God I command you to tell me what you are.' Behold, the ape answered that he was the devil, that he was waiting till the advocate would omit, on some day, his accustomed prayer to the Mother of God; he added, that he had permission from God to strangle him on that day, and to carry him off to hell. At these words the poor advocate fell on his knees, and asked assistance from the servant of God, who encouraged him, and commanded the devil to depart from the house without doing him any harm. 'I only give you permission,' said the religious, 'to make a hole in one of the walls of the house as a sign of your departure.' After these words a loud noise was heard, and in the wall an aperture instantly appeared, which God wished to remain for a long period, though it had been closed several times with lime and stone.—Vol. i., p. 310.

We think we have now proved sufficiently that in order to the efficacy of this devotion to Mary, no repentance is required. This "practice of piety" may be followed by a highwayman or a harlot, by people in the constant exercise of the grossest sin, and yet, while it is persevered in, the devil has no power to hurt, and eventually the grace of contrition is bestowed. If we accept these stories as true, is not St. Liguori's assertion fully proved, that it is morally impossible that a servant of Mary's can be damned? Who would not be willing to take advantage of a means of salvation that does not require one to make, immediately, a painful effort to part with cherished sins, but only to spare a few minutes each day to say a "Hail, Mary." But, alas, the hardness of heart of some people is astonishing. There are some who grudge even this small trouble, and for whom St. Liguori and his coadjutors have been obliged to provide a still easier method of salvation. Without even requiring us to spend some minutes every day in prayer to the Virgin, they teach that it will be sufficient to find a couple of minutes some time or other in our lives, to put on the scapular of Mary in sorrow, and then we may bid defiance to the devil and all his works. Witness the story (vol. ii., p. 245), which we have not space to give entire, of the young man in Perugia, who sold his soul to the devil, by a writing under his hand, signed with his blood, and yet, notwithstanding, the poor devil was cheated; for when he came to obtain fulfilment of his bargain, he found that the young man had on his neck the scapular of Mary in sorrow, and the devil was neither able to persuade the young man to take it off, neither could he carry him to hell with it on; so he had to retire in confusion. And the following story is nearly as conclusive (vol. ii., p. 141):—

"A priest, hearing confession in a certain church, saw standing before him a young man, who appeared to wish and, at the same time, not to wish to go to confession. Looking at him several times, the father, at length, asked him if he wanted to go to confession. He answered in the affirmative; and finding that the confession would be a long one, the confessor brought him to a solitary apartment. The penitent began by saying that he was a foreigner and a nobleman, and that he did not know how God could pardon him after the life he had led. Besides innumerable sins of impurity and homicide, he said that he had entirely despaired of salvation, that he had begun to commit sins, not so much for the indulgence of his passions, as through contempt and hatred of God. He said, that, among other things, he always carried about him a crucifix, which he had maltreated through contempt. He said, that on that morning he made a sacrilegious communion; and for what purpose? In order to have an opportunity of afterwards trampling on the consecrated host. After having received the sacred host he wished to execute his wicked purpose, but was prevented through fear of the persons who were present. He then consigned to the confessor the consecrated particle which he had wrapped up in a paper. He stated, that in passing by the church he felt a strong impulse to enter; being unable to resist it, he went in, was instantly stung with remorse of conscience, and felt a certain confused and irresolute will to go to confession. Hence, he placed himself before the confessional; while he was standing there his confusion and diffidence were so great that he wished to leave the church, but it seemed to him that some one had kept him by force, until the father asked him if he wanted to go to confession. 'I now,' said he, 'see myself here; I find myself at confession, and I know not how.' The father then asked him if he had practised any devotion during this time, meaning devotion towards most holy Mary, for such miraculous conversions only come through the powerful hand of Mary.

'No, father,' replied the young man; 'I have practised no devotion; I regarded myself as already damned.' 'Reflect a little,' added the father, 'and endeavour to remember whether you were not in the habit of performing any act of devotion.' 'No, father,' he replied, 'I have practised none.' But putting his hand on his breast, he perceived that he wore the scapular of Mary in sorrow. 'Ah, sir,' said the confessor, 'do you not see that the Blessed Virgin has obtained this grace for you. Know,' added the father, 'that this is the church of the Virgin.'

And thus the whole mystery was explained; and the foreign nobleman went away full of gratitude to Mary, and resolved on leading a new life.

We mentioned above that there are two reasons which, to Protestant minds, make the continuance in sin appear very unsafe; one is the power of sin in hardening the heart, so as to make repentance the more unlikely the longer the sinner has persisted in vice; the other reason is, the uncertainty of life, and the danger of our being hurried away from this world without having power to carry our good resolutions into effect. Now, we have seen that the first of these dangers does not exist for those who are persuaded of the truth of St. Liguori's tales. No lengthened continuance of sinful habits throws any impediment in the way of contrition and pardon, if the form, at least, of devotion to the Virgin has been kept up. It remains for us to show how the second of these dangers is also obviated; but our article has run to a considerable length already; and we cannot now afford the room necessary for the additional citations which must be made from St. Liguori, for the reflections which the quotations we have made suggest, and for the consideration of the apologies which have been put forward in defence of the saint. We must, therefore, stop here for the present, but hope to pursue the subject in the next number. And when we have given another article to St. Liguori's devotional writings, we shall then be able to proceed to another topic, on which more than one of our subscribers have expressed a wish for information—namely, the moral theology of the same saint.

THE ROMISH SYSTEM.

[THE following thoughts have been communicated to us by the ex-Abbé Miel, formerly a distinguished Roman Catholic priest in France, and are, we think, highly interesting, as throwing light on the process of mind by which he was led to abandon the Church in which he was brought up. We would have wished to have presented it to our readers also in the original French, being conscious that it loses much of its real force and eloquence in our translation; but we are unable to do so from want of room.—ED.]

It is not merely the monopoly of truth which the Romish Church arrogates to herself, but also that of virtue. Her adherents never admit that any one can sincerely and conscientiously think differently from themselves in religious matters; and to hold back or refuse submission to the authority of Rome is generally, in their eyes, only a sign of pride or perversity. This prejudice, injurious as it is to those against whom it is directed, is also most fatal to those who are its slaves. To seek to dissipate what I believe to be a fatal doctrine, and to show, with God's help, whether it be the partisans of the Romish system or its adversaries, who have reason and conscience for their guide, is the end I have in view in writing the following lines. And, first, let us consider the unheard-of fact, one which has not its parallel in the annals of mankind, and which, therefore, singularly provokes to reflection, that an institution exists among us, of which each member taken singly is only a sinful man like other men, but which institution, nevertheless, gives itself out to be divine, and arrogates to itself the highest attributes of divinity. Addressing itself to every human being who comes into the world, it demands from him homage, fidelity, obedience, love; it says to him, "Come to me, I am the way, out of which you will infallibly go astray. No one comes to the Son, and, consequently, to the Father, except by me. I am the truth, certain, immutable as God himself; out of me there is only uncertainty, darkness, and lies. I am life; I open and shut the springs of it at my will; he who drinks of my waters will live eternally; he who deprives himself of them can only perish. My empire resembles no other; it is the absolute empire of souls. I reign over the intelligence to which I give laws, and impose impassable barriers. I reign over the heart; its most secret movements ought to be revealed to me. I reign over the conscience; I have the power to bind or to absolve it; and this power does not end with the life that now is, it passes the tomb, and extends to another world!" What language is this? Who ever held such before? Yet these are only some of the pretensions of Rome!

Now, in considering these pretensions, we will suppose a wise man, a man sincerely anxious about his eternal destiny! a man to whom salvation is the greatest of all affairs! What should this man do? Should he accept such assertions immediately, without hesitation, without examining them? Such conduct would be the most culpable temerity on his part! If they related to matters of little moment it might pass; one could understand a determination being lightly taken. But the question placed before him is a capital question; it is a question of life or death; error would be fatal—would be damnation.

Never was it more indispensable to proceed with caution and with prudence, and not to decide, except with perfect confidence; therefore, the man, who is a sincere friend to truth and duty, will consider himself as rigorously obliged to weigh carefully, to examine strictly, to reflect maturely on these pretensions, before he surrenders himself to them, as his guide through time and eternity.

Well! let him set to work, and he will scarcely have reflected a moment before what appeared only strange, will now appear suspicious. What! will he say to himself, men who give themselves out as having rights over the soul—the soul which is the peculiar province of God! Men who call themselves infallible, when experience has shown, everywhere and always, that human beings are subject to illusion and error, when the Holy Spirit has revealed to us that it is so without exception—"Omnis homo mendax." Men who claim for themselves the special attributes of God! who wish to make themselves equal to the Most High! Was it not a crime of this kind that created hell, and which has flooded the earth with a deluge of evils? Was it not for wishing to become like God that Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden, and that Lucifer was cast out of Heaven? How much reason have I to fear that men of like passions with myself should act in this matter under the influence of the same spirit of pride, which seduced even the angels of God, and man in a state of innocence. How ought I to be on my guard, and how foolish and criminal should I be to yield up all power over my own soul into the hands of these men, unless they can really *prove* to me, and that in the most irresistible way, their divine authority! Let them give proofs, therefore, and manifest testimony, which shall exclude all doubt, and prevent any hesitation; without this my adherence to your system cannot be conscientious. These proofs, too, and this testimony, must be of a nature not only to satisfy a fully developed intelligence, but open to the comprehension of mankind in general, and of unlearned minds, otherwise your religion is, at once, convicted of not being the religion of Christ; for it was the poor and the humble, in the first place, that he came to evangelize. Now, does Rome produce such proofs and such testimony? can she furnish them? I do not say a great number of proofs, or even several, but *even one—one* which can legitimately command the submission of both wise and simple! No, there is not one—Rome produces no proof. She does not even seek to furnish one, but by a new pretension, stranger still than the rest, and truly worthy to crown the others, in assertions so prodigious, and of such importance, Rome expects to be believed on her word!

A man once appeared in the midst of time who did not fear to make this prodigious affirmation—"I am God." This man was JESUS CHRIST, the only Son of the Father, and equal to him in all things. Certainly, if ever any one had a right to be believed on his own assertion, it was the Incarnate Word. So far, also, was this divine assertion, when he made it, from appearing suspicious, that, coming from him, one would be predisposed to admit it. It was enough to contemplate once that august countenance to feel convinced that Jesus was more than man; it was enough to hear one word from his mouth to be able to say, "Never man spake like this man." Well, did the Son of God avail himself of these favourable dispositions to invoke in favour of his divinity, only his own testimony? Let us listen to him and learn!—"If I bear witness of myself my witness is nothing"—that is to say, you ought not to submit to it; but it is my Father who bears witness of me—it is the Scriptures and my works, also, bear witness to me." And, in truth, the Father was heard proclaiming several times from Heaven, "This is my well-beloved Son." Tested by the Scriptures, he sheweth himself in all things to be the end of the law—the realization of its figures, as well as the object of its predictions; and his miraculous works attested his divinity in a still more satisfying manner. All infirmities and diseases fled before his face as before the master of health. The dead were raised to life at his voice, as at the voice of the author of life. The sea bowed beneath his feet, as if under the feet of its sovereign. All nature was moved at his approach, as at the approach of its King; and even the devils obey his voice, and are constrained to confess to his supreme power. This was the way in which Jesus Christ *proved* and confirmed his assertions, and such is the value which He sets upon human reason, the greatest of the gifts which we have received from the liberality of the Creator. Such are the proofs which the incarnate word condescended and thought it right to present to us, before He demanded our adoration, in order that it might be paid him with full faith and love.

And yet, you, poor mortals—as miserable as the rest of mortals—pretend to impose your authority on my soul, without informing me first, if you have any legitimate title to such power. Vainly does the voice of all ages cry out to you that *none is permitted to pronounce in their own case*. Vainly does eternal truth consecrate the principle, and herself set us the example of it. There exists in the world a society of men who, despising the voice of ages, exalting themselves above the Son of God, repeat loudly and continually, "*We bear witness of ourselves and our witness is true. We judge in our own case and every soul ought to submit to our decisions. Woe to those who refuse!*" Mahomet appealed for the truth of his doctrine to the sword. We appeal for the truth of ours to hell! Mahomet said, 'believe or I kill thee.' Sometimes